

STRATEGIC PLANNING ANNUAL REPORT
Winchester Community Music School, June 2016

Strategic Priority #1: Program Development and Expansion

Create and implement programming that provides greater artistic growth within each musical discipline.

Based on feedback from the strategic plan and the January 2015 programmatic survey, the programmatic council of department chairs continues to develop programming initiatives and new offerings. The three main areas of focus are:

1. Programming, particularly in the area of supplemental classes and ensembles
2. Goal setting & student expectations
3. Performance opportunities

1. 60% of the survey respondents were happy with the current programming across genres. The remaining 40% of respondents wanted more programming in non-classical genres. Jazz, rock and bluegrass were the top three suggestions for non-classical programming. In 2015-2016, WCMS added more sections of jazz ensembles, rock bands, a junior percussion ensemble, the Village Band, and an adult continuing education class in Dalcroze Eyrhythmics. Additionally, WCMS continued to promote existing classes and ensembles including String Sinfonietta and the Suzuki program. The new initiatives added \$31,500 in revenue.

2. The survey highlighted a discrepancy in expectations between faculty, parents, and students. The discrepancy provided WCMS an opportunity to create more channels of communication around setting and meeting appropriate musical goals. In October, faculty set aside time in lessons to meet with students and their parents. Using the redeveloped progress reports as a guideline, the faculty, students and parents discussed goals and expectations for the upcoming year.

3. The survey also showed that stakeholders wanted more student performances with an emphasis on group and ensemble performances. In the 2015/2016 year, student honors recitals were offered in four departments: piano; woodwind, brass, and percussion; voice; and strings. Additionally, a number of students performed in the Faculty Recital Series, Back to Back. Student ensembles also continued to be an important part of WCMS outreach into the community.

For 2016/2017, WCMS will continue to find ways to increase enrollment in order to support programmatic growth and maintain the excellent teaching quality by:

- Increasing awareness around the breadth of offerings
- Attracting new students
- Considering new programming that are more exploratory to help with recruitment and retention efforts

Strategic Priority #2: Marketing and Strategic Communication

Develop strategies for more effective communication with internal and external audiences.

The marketing staff, working closely with the marketing and communications committee, continues to focus their work on a few areas in order to develop strategies for more effective communication with internal and external audiences. In addition to a robust print and social media marketing plan, specific initiatives include:

1. Video project
2. Trial lessons
3. Drop in classes
4. Outreach and enrichment

1. In 2016/2017, WCMS and Black Kettle Films will produce 21 short videos to elaborate on the depth of programming offered at WCMS. The videos will simplify communication on the WCMS website by bringing program offerings to life and by minimizing text descriptions. The videos will also enable WCMS to reduce printed publications and will help expand WCMS's web and social media presence.

2. Trial lessons were offered twice during the 2015-16 school year, with the goal of increasing private lesson students. In fall 2015, WCMS offered 49 trial lessons and converted 29% to private lesson registrations. WCMS repeated the trial lessons again in the spring and had a conversion rate of 14% on 37 lessons. WCMS will continue offering trial lessons to help recruitment in under enrolled studios.

3. WCMS offered drop in classes with the Early Childhood/Dalcroze department twice this year. Between the fall and spring semesters, 31 additional classes were scheduled for visitors and currently enrolled students. The drop-in classes offered opportunities for current students to learn about the class progression in the Early Childhood/Dalcroze program and also invited prospective students to observe WCMS program offerings.

4. In addition to the many outreach performances in local community, WCMS began focusing on creating enrichment programs within an academic setting. WCMS participated at Lincoln School's STEAM Night building box banjos with students and exploring the science of sound. Annie Bartlett and faculty member Tad Hitchcock then put together a program around the box banjo project and worked with the Ambrose Elementary School kindergarten classes. For the 2016/2017 year, the programmatic council of department chairs will continue to develop ideas for new enrichment programs to bring into the local schools. WCMS will also be partnering with Parent-to-Parent to host a talk by Dr. Aniruddh Patel titled "Music Making and Your Child's Developing Mind" in the fall of 2016.

Strategic Priority #3: Customer Experience Improvement

Assess and enhance customer service at key points of contact.

The main focus for 2016/2017 is to implement the online registration database, ASAP. Former registrar, Karel Olsson, will return to WCMS as project manager for the transition. WCMS has signed a contract with ASAP and implementation and billing begin in July. The software capacities will be fully functional for spring 2017 registration based on the following schedule:

- July - Build the import structure and upload existing data
- October - Soft launch to test the new system
- December – Launch software for student enrollment for the spring 2017

Strategic Priority #4: Succession Plan Development

Develop a comprehensive succession plan for WCMS leadership and key staff.

From a staffing perspective, 2015-2016 was a year of transition, WCMS took the opportunity to restructure the administrative team in order to:

1. Respond to the current administrative needs of the school
2. Better align staffing and board positions with the strategic priorities
3. Create more areas of overlap between positions
4. Add capacity to enable WCMS to respond to new initiatives and enrollment growth

WCMS's Director of Development moved to a part-time position allowing WCMS to create a new position for an Assistant Director. Adding an Assistant Director addressed the need for more marketing and communications support and also addressed the one major weakness identified in the strategic planning process, there was not enough of Laurie Russell. Hayley Woldseth is the new Assistant Director. WCMS also reevaluated the business manager position. The position was split into two part-time positions – a business manager and a staff accountant. Rob Palmer is the new Business Manager and former WCMS advisor, Loni Paul, is the new staff accountant. Bert Benedict came back in a part-time position as facilities coordinator and WCMS outsourced the majority of the cleaning to a cleaning company.

Board member Cynthia Umscheid completed a faculty and staff compensation study. The study will be invaluable in the 2017-2018 budget cycle and allows WCMS to gauge salary levels with peer schools to help with retention of faculty and staff.

In 2016/2017, the Board of Trustees will restructure the committees to be more closely aligned with the strategic priorities. The board also approved the creation of an ad-hoc board committee specifically focused on the feasibility study for a new

performance space. The committee will be headed up by Rick Eno and will begin work in September.

Strategic Priority #5: Performance Space Expansion

Generate feasible option(s) to expand WCMS's performance space.

In the April board meeting, Rick Eno presented a discussion guide on progress made to date around this priority. He discussed the key issues which will influence WCMS definition of options and the ultimate choice for a performance space.

- What is the scope of the project and how does it impact the current and future use of the school?
- How much will it cost and do we have the capacity to raise the money?
- Are there any other issues or space planning needs that we should take into consideration based on the program development and expansion survey?
- What are the non-financial costs to WCMS in embarking on a performance space expansion?
 - Disruption to the current operations
 - Demand on current admin and staffing
- Rick then proposed three options for further evaluation:
 - Continue on Current Course – no major renovation or building project
 - Optimize Current Space (or variation of owning a space offsite)
 - Add Performance Space to WCMS

The board discussed the support needed to have in place to get moving on the analysis of all three options. As a result, the board agreed to create a committee dedicated to the performance space expansion that will work closely with the working group to answer the questions surrounding strategic priority #5.